

Message Text

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TAGS: EGN, PFOR, UNGA,IN, US

SUBJECT: INDIAN PRESS ON UNGA SPECIAL SESSION

BEGIN SUMMARY: INDIAN MEDIA COVERAGE OF UNGA SEVENTH SPECIAL SESSION STRESSED WHAT WAS CHARACTERIZED AS A NEGATIVE US ROLE. THE POSITIVE STATEMENTS OF THE FINANCE MINISTER AND FOREIGN MINISTER WERE OFFSET BY NEWS AND EDITORIAL COMMENT CRITICIZING WASHINGTON'S ATTITUDE. END SUMMARY.

1. NEWS COVERAGE, MOSTLY ON FRONT PAGE, WAS EXHAUSTIVE, EMPHASIZING THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES VIEWPOINT AND SYMPATHETIC SPEECHES BY THIRD WORLD DELEGATES. LEADING NEWSPAPERS' REPORTAGE ON THE DEVELOPED NATIONS WAS BIASED, SIGNALLING OUT THE U.S. AS THE CHIEF SPOKESMAN OF THE RICH NATIONS AND AS ONE WHICH STOOD AGAINST THE "TIDE OF INTERNATIONAL OPINION..REMAINING A STUBBLING BLOCK TO THE SATISFACTORY CONCLUSION OF THE CURRENT SESSION" (TIMES OF INDIA). MOST ACCOUNTS, BASED ON THE PRESS TRUST OF INDIA REPORT, DECLARED THAT THE FINAL DOCUMENT WAS SIGNED "AMIDST FUNDAMENTAL RESERVATIONS FROM THE U.S. ON KEY ECONOMIC ISSUES."

2. SECRETARY KISSINGER'S "PACKAGE OF PROPOSALS" RECEIVED
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PROMINENT COVERAGE BUT INFLUENTIAL PAPERS WERE DIVIDED

IN THEIR ESTIMATES OF THE EXPECTED BENEFITS OR HOPES FROM THESE PROPOSALS. SOME ECONOMIC PAPERS TERMED THEM "THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE...RESPONSE BY ANY INDUSTRIALIZED NATION TO THE BASIC DEMANDS OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES" (ECONOMIC TIMES) OR "THE FIRST POSITIVE RESPONSE TO COME FROM WASHINGTON" (TIMES OF INDIA).

3. CONFLICTING REPORTS APPEARED ABOUT THE U.S. STAND ON DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE. WHILE PARASURAM IN THE INDIAN EXPRESS REPORTED THAT WASHINGTON IS AGREEABLE TO GO ALONG WITH THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES' WATERED DOWN FORMULATION FOR INCREASE IN DEVELOPMENT AID, KAMATH IN THE TIMES OF INDIA HELD THIS IS ONE OF THE ISSUES ON WHICH U.S. IS HOLDING OUT HOWEVER, BOTH OF THEM AS WELL AS WIRE-SERVICE DISPATCHES MAINTAINED THAT THE U.S. IS "ALMOST ALONE" IN OPPOSING SDR LINKS.

4. THE MINISTERS' STATEMENTS BY SUBRAMANIAM AND CHAVAN MADE WHEN THEY RETURNED FROM WASHINGTON AFTER MEETINGS WITH U.S. OFFICIALS ON INDO-U.S. RELATIONS GENERATED WIDE COVERAGE BUT LIMITED OPTIMISTIC ANALYSIS IN MAJOR NEWSPAPERS LIKE THE HINDUSTAN TIMES, INDIAN EXPRESS AND FINANCIAL EXPRESS. HOWEVER, IN WIDESPREAD COMMENT ON THE UNGA SESSION, MANY OBSERVERS CRITICIZED THE ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES. MOST VOCAL WAS THE CONGRESS PARTY-ORIENTED NATIONAL HERALD, WHICH TERMED WASHINGTON'S ROLE AS "NEGATIVE...INTRANSIGENCE...DEPLORABLE." A FEW INDEPENDENT OBSERVERS FELT THAT WASHINGTON HAS "PRODUCED A CROP OF CONCRETE IDEAS" (HINDUSTAN TIMES) AND EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE AMERICAN ATTITUDE WILL "CHANGE SOONER OR LATER." (FINANCIAL EXPRESS).

5. THE CONSENSUS OF EDITORIAL OPINION WAS THAT THE UNGA RESOLUTION WAS A "CONSIDERABLE ACHIEVEMENT" FOR THE THIRD WORLD BUT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS NEEDS THE POLITICAL WILL WHICH IS NOT "AMENABLE TO CONFERENCE ELOQUENCE" (HINDUSTAN TIMES). ANALYSTS WERE EMPHATIC IN WARNING THAT THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES HAVE TO REALIZE THAT THEIR PROSPERITY CANNOT ENDURE IN A WORLD IN WHICH ONE THIRD IS AFFLUENT AND TWO-THIRDS ARE PLUNGED IN POVERTY. THE INDIAN EXPRESS OBSERVED THAT IF THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

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"DO NOT RELENT ON GLOBAL ECONOMIC MATTERS LIFE MAY BECOME SO DIFFICULT FOR SOME POOR COUNTRIES THAT THE RICH WILL NOT REMAIN UNAFFECTED." SCHNEIDER

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